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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN POSITION ON CFE, ISTANBUL COMMITMENTS
UNCHANGED

REF: USOSCE 481

Classified By: DCM Daniel A. Russell. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) The Chief of the Conventional Arms Control Division in the Foreign Ministry's Department of Security Affairs and Disarmament, Anton Mazur, told us 28 November that we could expect "little or no change" in the GOR's approach to Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) issues at next week's OSCE Foreign Ministers Meeting in Brussels. The veteran Mazur, with almost 20 years experience on conventional arms control issues, said Moscow's position would reflect essentially the same position it took at the Third CFE review conference in June. In particular, Mazur echoed recent public statements by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko and other senior officials that Russia had already met all of its 1999 Istanbul commitments.

¶2. (C) Mazur questioned the relevance of CFE, which he said no longer served Russia's interests, adding that Moscow was currently assessing the Treaty's role within a broader analysis of the OSCE. He declined to say when the official review would be completed and disputed media reports that Moscow might withdraw from the Treaty. Nonetheless, Mazur characterized the future of CFE as "gloomy."

¶3. (C) With respect to two confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) papers on transit and deployment of forces, which Russia had initially proposed in the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, Mazur complained that other States Parties (mainly NATO Allies) had not responded more positively to these overtures. The two CSBMs were designed to mitigate political concerns and were neither overly intrusive nor aimed at undermining the operational security of troop movements. He brushed aside arguments that, if approved, the proposals would have granted benefits associated with the unratified Adapted CFE Treaty. Mazur said it was unfortunate that NATO had been asked to comment on the papers since "some" of the Allies tended to take a harsher view of Russian intentions.

¶4. (C) On broader OSCE issues, Mazur said there was little chance that Moscow would be able to agree to language on the situations in Georgia and Moldova, making the possibility of issuing a Ministerial Declaration "highly unlikely."

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Mazur's comments are not new and, as he told us at the outset of our conversation, "we know your position, and you know ours." Although his arms control brief covers only a portion of the OSCE agenda, his remarks on Russia's Istanbul commitments and the situation in Georgia and Moldova suggest that Russia will not be in a compromising mood at next week's ministerial.

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